Impressions of Sinn Féin in America

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BY

MRS. SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON

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SINN FÉIN IN AMERICA

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

We regret that, owing to circumstances beyond our control, this pamphlet, hastily compiled in December last for the General Election, could not be published until now, and that the proofs have not been corrected by the author; in view, however, of the present Irish campaign in the United States it is now of even more vital interest.

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IMPRESSIONS OF SINN FÉIN IN AMERICA

AN ACCOUNT OF EIGHTEEN MONTHS' IRISH PROPAGANDA IN THE UNITED STATES

BY
HANNA SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON

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Impressions of
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When I first learned the facts about my husband's murder by Captain Bowen Colthurst on April 26th, 1916, I made up my mind — and this intention was strengthened after the abortive inquiry forced from Mr. Asquith in connection with the case — to go to America and to tell that story of British militarism to every audience in the States that I could reach. After the wholly unsatisfactory report of the Simon inquiry in September of that year I approached a friend of mine—a politician—and asked him to take steps with a view to obtaining for me a pass-port in my own name to the United States. Upon inquiry he was told that no pass-port would be given me except on certain strict conditions. When I inquired what these conditions were, I was told that I must pledge myself in writing not to discuss Ireland, Great Britain, or the War, while in the United States, even in a private conversation. I told my friend that I could accept no such conditions, but that I would pledge myself, while in the United States, "to tell the truth and nothing but the truth about Ireland, Great Britain, and the War." When I said this my friend laughed and replied: "Truth in war time—impossible!" and it was only afterwards while in the States that I came to realise the profound truth of his words.

A great writer once said: "Truth is the first casualty of war," and as far as the truth with regard to her relations towards Ireland, and with regard to Easter Week, Great Britain has been most chary of that export; so much so that

I found subsequently that the fact that one had been able to obtain a pass-port from the authorities discredited one as far as propaganda was concerned in the United States, because people felt that those provided with pass-ports had a duty imposed upon them beforehand to tell only such portions of their story as would be acceptable to Great Britain. The refusal to grant me a pass-port, however, strengthened me in my conviction that good work could be done in the United States by telling the truth about Ireland, and that the more the authorities desired to block me, the more imperative it was to go. I made up my mind, accordingly, to go all the same, and, the front door being barred to me, I took the side door, and took what used to be called "French" leave, but what we may now more properly call "Irish" leave, of the authorities. How this was done, unfortunately, I may not yet say. My former experience as a militant suffragette served me now to some good purpose; I took my boy of seven with me, and he was also sufficiently "camouflaged" to pass muster. I arrived in the United States in December, 1916. Feeling was then running very high. About the time my boat arrived I was missed at home, and the long arm of the British authorities was stretched out across the sea after me; word was sent through the American authorities on Ellis Island to detain me with my boy, with a view to having us deported by the next boat as offenders against the Defence of the Realm Act. The American authorities, however, did not see their way to take such action; it was not the first time that the United States has welcomed political refugees; in fact, the then Mayor of New York (John Mitchel) was himself the grandson of a famous political refugee who escaped to the United States with a price upon his head. The Americans were rather "tickled" at the idea of evading DORA, and the American Press made the most of the episode in its picturesque way.

Things were very ripe for propaganda just then in America. Other Irish refugees had got over during the months following the Easter Rising, and had done splendid work in telling the tale of Easter Week. Miss Nora Connolly, daughter of James Connolly, Mr. Liam Mellows, Miss Nellie Gifford, Mrs. and Mr. Padraic Colum, later Dr. McCartan, Captain Monteith, and others, had helped to enlighten American public opinion, always open-minded,

eager to learn, and always interested in Ireland and Irish politics. Several books had appeared: "Ireland's Tragic Easter," edited by Mr. Padraic Colum; "The Sinn Fein Movement," by Mr. Frank Jones; again, later, Miss Margaret Skinnider's book entitled "Doing my Bit for Ireland;" Miss Nora Connolly's "The Unbroken Tradition." In addition there was great demand for every scrap of writing by the men and women of Easter Week, and America seemed to have awakened to the fact that there was a new Ireland, that Irish-Americans had every reason to be proud of. The effect of the Easter rising, and, above all, of its suppression, had revolutionized public sentiment in America and had stirred up all the slumbering fires of revolt hidden away in the Irish-American heart. Not only did this effect Irish-Americans, it touched profoundly Americans of whatever nationality; for, after all, your only real American to-day who can absolutely disassociate himself from the hyphenates is the Red Indian. Europe, not Great Britain, is the mother of America to-day. The same tales of horror and militarism, and the crushing of oppressed peoples woke responsive echoes in the hearts of Russians, Poles, Germans, Belgians, Jews, Italians, and even of the few inhabitants of the United States that are of English or Scottish descent. One of the facts that struck the Americans most profoundly was that the leaders of Easter week, afterwards executed, were men of such outstanding intellectuality—poets, writers, painters, sculptors. As an American writer said, speaking of Joseph Plunkett and Padraic Pearse: "In Italy they blind nightingales—in England they kill poets."

There are in the United States, it is estimated, twenty millions of Irish birth or descent—that is to say, a fifth of the entire population is of Irish strain. The Irish in America, in addition, cling to the thoughts of Ireland, with its traditions, with a tenacity that is shown by the descendants of no other country. One can imagine therefore the effect upon public opinion of an Irish Rising in the midst of a war alleged to be on behalf of the small nations, followed by so many executions, deportations, murders. It is my opinion —and that is shared by many in America—that the United States would have entered the war in 1916 but for Easter Week. Another effect of the Easter Rising is to demonstrate more clearly than anything else could have done the fact that Ireland is not satisfied to be a province or colony of

Great Britain; up to that time British propaganda had been busy, creating the impression that Ireland was loyal to Great Britain, that Ireland cared more about the freedom of Belgium than she cared about her own, that in fact the Irish Nation had become snug and comfortable, prosperous through the war, and glad of the "protection" afforded her by the British fleet, that the dreams of old of an independent Irish Republic were dead. It is not surprising that this should be so, because of the open support given by Mr. Redmond and his Party, by Mr. William O'Brien and his Party (that is to say, by all save one, Mr. Ginnell, of the Irish Nationalist representatives at Westminster) to the war policy of Great Britain. Great Britain was able to point out this fact in America to demonstrate that the Irish at last were loyal, and that Ireland was, in the words of Sir Edward Grey, "The One Bright Spot in the British Empire."

Some of the Irish papers in America, notably the "Irish World" and the New York "Freeman's Journal," which had hitherto supported the Irish Party, had broken away from it at the beginning of the war, but there were many other controlled and syndicated papers left, and all these, including the weekly organ, "America," subsidised for that purpose, spoke of Ireland's new-found devotion to the British Empire. The guns of Easter Week helped effectively to kill that calumny.

Most of the leaders who perished during Easter Week were well-known in America, especially Padraic Pearse, Sir Roger Casement, Thomas Ashe, and James Connolly. The effect of their deaths was more powerful in swaying American sentiment to sympathy with Ireland than all the efforts of the syndicated press. Moreover, President Wilson had just been re-elected as President of the United States on the issue that he had "kept America out of the War." He was still working very hard to preserve America's neutrality, and he was backed by strong sentiment in Congress and the entire Pacifist movement of the United States. On all this movement the story of Ireland's Easter Week had a powerful effect. The murder of my husband especially, told in all its naked horror, was used by Pacifists as a powerful indictment of militarism, tending to shew that militarists are all alike. In the first days after my arrival in America I succeeded in having an interview with

ex-President Roosevelt, and of laying the facts before him. He informed me subsequently that he had proved the truth of my statements, and had correspondence with Mr. Lloyd George on the subject. I also met Colonel House, and informed him in detail of the terrible Portobello murders, of the court-martial, the shielding of the guilty parties, of the shooting of James Connolly. On him and other leaders of America that story of Easter Week had a profound and salutary effect, and helped, as I have said, the case for Ireland. About that time (December, 1916,) an enormous Irish Fair was held in Madison Square Gardens, New York, for the purpose of raising funds for the victims of Easter Week. New York was placarded with huge posters depicting the shooting of Connolly, Irish propaganda being taken over and strengthened by a new organisation called "Friends of Irish Freedom." For the first time Americans of other nationalities began to interest themselves in Irish Freedom, and many of them joined this organization. The American press, notably the "Hearst Papers," the "New York Evening Post," and various radical organs, took up the case for Ireland. In fact, so huge was the demand for information on Irish questions that an army of writers could have been kept busy for long after the Rising. I was told that accounts of the state of things in Ireland occupied more space in American journals during April and May, 1916, than any other war matter.

My first meeting was held in the Carnegie Hall, New York, on January the 6th, 1917. Before that I had been inundated in characteristic style by American newspaper men, photographs had been taken of us both (my boy and myself) until I dreaded the process as I would have dreaded a visit to a dentist. Even my little boy had been "interviewed" by an enterprising young editor, eager for copy, while many newspaper women insisted on making what are called "sob-stories" out of the case. The Americans, like the Germans and British, even perhaps to a greater degree, are incurably sentimental. They like rather blatant appeals to the emotions, and are very eager for "thrills." The human interest, as they call it, particularly appeals to them, and usually, as everywhere, in America a woman has a good show and is more sure of sympathy and kindliness in the States than usually would be the case in any other country. I had heard many weird tales of the unscrupulous-

ness of American interviewers, but in my entire experience of them—and it was pretty wide before I left the country—I never once found them unfair or unkind; even when their papers were hostile to our Irish propaganda, it often has happened that the reporter was Irish and managed in spite of editorial blue-pencils to give our story a good show. Invariably they were particularly "tickled" by the story (such as it could be given) of the escape from the clutches of DORA without a pass-port, and the game way in which our little nation stood up alone against the world, and dared to rise and try conclusions with the greatest, most powerful Empire in the world appealed to the sportsmanlike sense of the Americans.

At Carnegie Hall I delivered my lecture under the presidency of Mr. Bainbridge Colby, an influential American (afterwards put in charge of the American Shipping Department) and a personal friend of President Wilson's. The gathering was not entirely Irish—in fact, every section of the American Republic was represented—pacifists, suffragists, Russians, and a large sprinkling of newspaper men, judges (most of them New York judges or Irish), socialists; in fact the papers on the next day noted the cosmopolitan character of the gathering, New York being, of course, the most international of American cities. The Irish element was also naturally strong, for many Irish emigrants never go beyond New York—as it is popularly said: "there are more Irish in New York than in Cork." My lecture was entitled "British Militarism as I Have Known it." Fortunately, I was well primed as to documents, having managed to get various documents bearing on the case out before me; I confined myself entirely to facts without personal comment, and allowed the Americans to draw their own conclusions; I dealt not only with the story of my husband's murder but with the North King Street shootings, the death of the boy Coade, of Councillor Richard O'Carroll, the deportations and raids, and of the horrors that have become the platitudes and the every-day happenings in a country under military occupation. It was this address which I delivered mainly throughout the entire tour, though on other occasions for special meetings I dealt with the Ulster problem and with the labour movement in Ireland.

Subsequently we printed the story in pamphlet form and it was circulated not only throughout the United States,

but in Canada, the Phillipines and South America. When in the following April America entered the war on the side of the Allies, I continued to deliver the same lecture through the States, and it is a remarkable fact showing, I think, the strong feeling there is in America for Ireland, that Irish propaganda, except in one or two slight incidents, was never interfered with, though it was continued, if possibly, more intensely and more passionately after the United States had become associated with Great Britain. We also reprinted my husband's article, "A Forgotten Small Nationality," published in the Century Magazine, February, 1916.

Immediately under the auspices of "The Friends of Irish Freedom," and of various other Irish or Pacifist groups, a tour was organised for me throughout the New-England States. In connection with this an interesting episode occurred. The British Agents in the United States are naturally very perturbed at the Irish propaganda on behalf of our small nation. They dislike particularly propaganda of such Irish exiles as myself who had come directly from Ireland, and could speak with first-hand knowledge. As one of them pathetically observed: "My objection to Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington is that she has a lot of damaging facts." Accordingly, a trap was laid for me. I was invited by a Women's Society in Toronto to cross the frontier and lecture there on Woman's Suffrage. I realised that Suffrage was being possibly used as a bait to get me on hostile ground, where I might be interned, and politely refused the invitation. On my journey, however, to Buffalo I was intercepted near the Canadian Border by a small group of men and women who wore green badges, and who represented themselves as a local committee sent to meet me, and to be my escort. They invited me to board a train, and I was about to step into it unsuspecting, when, happening to look down the platform, I saw in the distance an agitated group with waving umbrellas and handkerchiefs, and trying to draw my attention. I waited for them to come up, in spite of the urgent insistence of my green-badged escort that I should board the train at once. When they came up I discovered that they were the genuine committee sent to meet me, and that the train which I was about to board was one bound for Canada, which would have got me safely across the border within half-an-hour!

While these explanations were going on I looked around for my first escort and found that they were rapidly disappearing, having succeeded in escaping the clutches of the local committee. We were never able to discover their identity, but the conclusion was obvious, that they were sent to decoy me into Canada, and after that incident I was usually on my guard, and careful when near the Canadian frontier as to the trains and routes I should take. The British Agents, however, still continued busy, and I frequently found my luggage was tampered with, the contents of my desk ransacked, doubtless with the object of connecting me with some bogus "plot" or other. As my propaganda courted publicity I was not embarrassed by these little attentions. We in Ireland are quite inured to them. Sometimes, locally, attempts were made by the British Agents to interfere with the letting of halls for Irish meetings, but usually the local committee was able to deal effectively with such attempts. In fact adverse newspaper talk at a meeting engineered for hostile purposes usually helped us. As American slang has it: "A knock is a boost" —in other words, an attack is very often a free advertisement! One of the many such free advertisements given was afforded by the President of Harvard University. I was invited by the students to lecture there in the early months of 1917, when America was still a neutral country. President Lowell is well-known for his strong pro-British sentiment. A week before my lecture Major Ian Beith Hay had been lecturing frankly for British recruiting purposes and was not interfered with in any way. The President, however, woke up to the fact that my propaganda was pro-Irish, and suddenly, on the day of the meeting, took it into his head to forbid the students the use of the hall. The students resented this action, and promptly engaged a larger hall over which the President had no control, with the result that we had an extremely successful meeting. Much indignation was expressed in the College paper, as well as in New York and Boston papers, on the President's attempt to suppress free speech. Other Presidents profited by the example, and I was not interfered with in lecturing at Columbia University, New York, Chicago University, Madison University, Wisconsin, Wellesley Women's College, and others. In general, I may say, schools, colleges, and universities in America as well as Women's

Clubs which are a special feature of the country, afforded a very valuable ground for Irish Propaganda—a ground hitherto almost untouched because, unfortunately, many Irish speakers who visit the States make the profound mistake of devoting themselves exclusively to addressing Irish audiences. I made it a point of never refusing an invitation to address any society on the question of Ireland, from the most conservative and re-actionary to the most advanced and democratic, because it was my object to expose British hypocrisy to as wide a circle as possible throughout the entire States.

Great Britain was ever astute in her propaganda. From the time of the outbreak of the war she turned a regular army of lecturers into the United States, instructed, not only to put her case for the war before American audiences, but to vilify, wherever possible, those nations that did not agree with her in her Imperialistic ambitions. Her lecturers were chosen with care, schooled to appeal to every section of the community. There was, for instance, Major Ian Beith Hay, notorious for his book on "The Oppressed English," a jovial soldierly type camouflaged to represent the bluff, military man who takes "no interest in politics." He was sent to every town in which I lectured to conduct counter-propaganda. He told delighted audiences: "How jolly it was to be in the trenches, don't you know," and explained how we Irish were paid emissaries of the Kaiser. Then there were radical lecturers of the "Manchester Guardian" type, such as Mr. Radcliffe, formerly connected with that paper. Their line usually was to "regret profoundly the tragic errors" made by the British with regard to Ireland, but to indicate that the British democracy was sound and only desired to do the right thing towards Ireland, if but "the Irish would unite among themselves." Mrs. Pankhurst, ex-Militant Suffragist was sent to make an appeal specially to the women of the States. Alfred Noyes, the minor poet, poured out war poetry by the ream of the school of "Poppies in Picardy," flavoured by such trench sentiment as Patrick Magill favours. Then there were English priests who lectured at fashionable Womens' Clubs on the "Anti-Catholic" atrocities of the Germans, and who stated that the Sinn Feiners were all atheists, who fired on churches and murdered Nuns and lived immoral lives. Some of those lecturers, however, worked unconsciously on behalf of Ireland. Mr.

Balfour, Lord Northcliffe, Sir F. E. Smith, did us a world of good by showing the American people what we Irish have to suffer. It is no secret that Lord Northcliffe's propaganda created a very favourable impression in the United States, and that Sir F. E. Smith received a polite hint from the American Authorities that he should cut his visit short. Both of these gentlemen served only to stir up bitter race feeling in the States, and to inflame public sentiment against the cause that they advocated. For example, a distinguished Washington Journalist (a member of the Bureau of Public Information) told me that he had been converted into a Sinn Feiner by listening to Sir F. E. Smith. After hearing the after-dinner oratory of "Galloper" Smith he said: "I have become a convert to Irish Independence—I have just been listening to Sir F. E. Smith, and I now understand at last what you Irish have to put up with!"

On the occasion of the visit of Mr. Balfour to Washington he was invited to address Congress. Americans in general were very much repelled by the haughty superciliousness of the Balfourian style. Bluff and jovial Marshal Joffre produced everywhere a favourable and friendly impression, but Balfour, with his haughty aristocratic air froze up American sympathy. His speech fell flat in Congress for the morning on which he appeared to address it on behalf of the Small Nations every Congressman found mysteriously placed upon his desk by some unknown agency a little leaflet bearing the heading: "Who is Bloody Balfour?" giving a brief life history of Mr. Balfour and of his regime in Ireland, and an account of his famous Mitchelstown telegram to the Police on the occasion of the riot there: "Don't hesitate to shoot." The Congressmen, as I was told by a spectator, were more profoundly interested in the little leaflet than in Mr. Balfour's careful periods which, as a consequence, fell flat. Americans are puzzled at the curious specimens of British "democracy" that Great Britain exported to the United States to be her spokesmen. It seemed as if only Imperialists of the "Morning Post" brand were furnished with credentials. For instance, while Mrs. Pankhurst's campaign, Anti-Russian and Anti-Irish, was facilitated by the British Government Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, the distinguished Suffragist and Pacifist leader, was refused pass-ports to America where she was invited by American Suffragists to help in their campaign. Margaret Bondfield, who represented British

Labour, was similarly refused permission to travel to America to attend an important Labour Congress. In a like manner the more progressive Labour papers of England, as well as, of course the entire Sinn Fein and pro-Irish papers continued to be excluded from the mails even after America had entered the war. Such papers as "The Herald," "The Labour Leader," the Glasgow "Forward," "The Workers' Dreadnought," "The Irish Citizen," "New Ireland," etc., are not permitted to circulate in Canada or the United States. All these signs go to shew that the British Government is afraid of American public opinion finding it out for the sham that it is, which while preciously guarding every degree of liberty in certain sections of Europe would like to curtail and "Hooverize" these dangerous commodities as far as possible elsewhere. Now that the war restrictions are largely lifted from the American Press, and that the censorship can no loner continue to be so rigid in Great Britain, it will be more and more possible for the Progressive elements in all countries to get into touch with one another.

Yet in spite of this British Anti-Irish Propaganda, in spite of the daily misrepresentations of a controlled press, the most popular Small Nation in the eyes of the United States is still, as it always has been, Ireland. The reason for this is obvious. Americans have been worked up to an interest in Belgium and in Poland; they are beginning to find out about the Czecho-Slovaks and the Jugo-Slavs: they are learning to place the Rumanians and the Siberians on the map, and to pronounce the names of the various little new republics, such as the Ukraine and Esthonia—but Ireland—well, there have been enough Irish exiles and refugees all these years to keep America fully informed about the wrongs of one Small Nation, Ireland, which has given over one-fifth of its entire inhabitants to the Republic. The demand for an Irish Republic is also readily understood by the Americans. There are, in fact, only two views in America with regard to Ireland, namely: the view of Sir Edward Carson and that of Sir Roger Casement—the view that regards Ireland as an English Shire and the view that regards Ireland as a separate Nation. That is why at present the Sinn Fein Movement is more popular and more comprehensible than the Home Rule Movement, and that is why, probably, Mr. T. P. O'Connor's mission in America was

such a huge failure: he never succeeded during his nine months in the States in addressing a single public meeting in any town on the Irish Question; while, on the other hand, Republicans were everywhere eagerly welcomed. This is but natural in a country which is itself Republican in Government, and is so far the only one of the British Colonies that has been fortunate enough to throw over the yoke of Empire and set up a free Republic. Washington in fact may be claimed the first Sinn Feiner. Last April on the anniversary of America's entry into the war a little group of Irish delegates from the Irish Progressive League of New York, gave expression to this sentiment by laying a wreath upon the tomb of George Washington, bearing the colours Orange, White and Green, of the Irish Republic with the inscription: "To George Washington, half of whose army was Irish and whose ideals and principles inspired the men of Easter Week." Washington's tomb has been a place of pilgrimage since the war for all the Small Nations, all of them, from Japan to Belgium, have laid wreaths and scrolls upon the tomb of the father of the American Republic. Mr. Balfour and General Joffre paid their tribute to democracy also by floral emblems, but none is more appropriate than this last which lies upon the tomb of another great rebel. George Washington also was a traitor to the Empire, the only difference between his treason and the treason of Easter Week was that his treason succeeded. As the poet says:

"Treason doth never prosper."

What is the reason? When treason prospers none dare call it treason. One wonders what would have been the fate of George Washington if his treason had not prospered—no doubt he would have found his answer in a firing squad and a quick-lime grave.

ENTRY OF AMERICA INTO THE WAR.

With the entry of America into the war on Good Friday, 1917, there was naturally a certain change of front towards European problems, but, as the vested interests—the big-money-trusts, and so forth—had never really been neutral, the change was not as great and by no means as far reaching as might have been expected. This was particularly so with regard to the Irish, for the German element had less cohesion

and was more easily swamped. True, many of the Irish politicians for whom the Irish Question was mainly a political asset, a trap to catch votes, at once dropped their Irish propaganda like a hot coal and suddenly discovered that they were "Americans first, last, and all the time," whatever that may mean, and lectured us Irish on the iniquity of not standing in "now that the United States had come into the war." In fact, I would say, in general, that the Irish-American politician is one of the worst obstacles Ireland has to encounter. It is perhaps just as well that the "Hot Air Harps," as they are picturesquely called in American slang, have been found out for the sham that they are. The bulk of the people, however, in the United States still remained sound on the Irish Question. This is particularly true of the middle west and the western States. Indeed, had a referendum at any time been given on the question of America's entry into the war, there can be very little doubt but that the United States would have as a whole decided against it. Even upon America's entry and ever since, President Wilson has always made it clear that he regards the United States, not as an Ally of Great Britain and France and the other Allied Powers, but as an "associate," and once went the length of publicly correcting the Food Controller, Mr. Hoover, on this important point, Mr. Hoover having used the word "ally" on his public posters when referring to the United States and Great Britain. In the west it must be remembered that the serious problem is the question, not of German militarism but of Japan's Imperialistic ambitions. Therefore the war-enthusiasm of the west is tempered by a shrewd suspicion of Japan. There was, of course, the usual war hysteria in a pretty virulent form when America first decided to go in. I encoutered some of it in a rather amusing form in a little town in the middle-west, where I had been invited to lunch. There was much patriotic talk at the table. Noticing that I was somewhat silent a vivacious lady opposite me—the president of the Local Ladies' Club—and a social leader—said, I suppose with the intention of stimulating me conversationally: "And how do you think the war will end?" I replied solemnly: "I think it will end in peace." She started as if stung by a serpent and exclaimed, in tones of horror and consternation: "Oh, I had no idea you were a Pacifist!" Her exclamation illustrates well the attitude of some war-mongers in America. To them the mere suggestion

that there should ever again be peace on earth savoured of rank blasphemy, and, of course, as many of these "patriots" were engaged in the production of munitions or in other ways making huge sums out of the war, their attitude was not surprising. There was, therefore, pretty much the same ebullition of surface war hysteria in the States as there was in Great Britain in August, 1914, and, with the characteristic exuberance of a young people, the Americans have indulged in many extravagant and childish exhibitions in the much-abused name of patriotism. For instance the children in the schools have to salute the flag as a morning exercise; German music was banished; prayers in German were declared illegal in some States by Governor's proclamations; public libraries made bonfires of all their German books, while harmless German words like "Sauerkraut" and "Frankfurter" had to change their name into "liberty cabbage" and "liberty sausage." One no longer was permitted to suffer from "German" measles, only "American" measles being officially recognised. Of course, one might still drink German beer under another name, and the flavour, I believe, is not impaired.

There were, moreover, less harmless ebullitions of war sentiment, such as the lynching of the German Praeger in Collinsville, Illinois, and the tarring and feathering of suspected pro-Germans in the west. Many of these outrages were, however, the result of local press propaganda of a ferocious kind, while others, like the brutal lynching of Frank Little, a Labour Leader in Butte, Montana, and the tarring and feathering of the Rev. H. Bigelow, distinguished preacher and Social Reformer of Cincinnati, Ohio, had their origin, not in any Pro-Ally feeling, but in economic and social causes. Just as in the case of the "frame up" of Tom Mooney (the Socialist Labour Leader of San Francisco) by the Anti-Labour Corporations, so too in the case of Frank Little—it was not entirely an accident that he was organising the strike of miners for decent economic conditions when he was murdered; while Bigelow had aroused the hatred of the vice and drink interest in Cincinnati some years before by his plucky fight and subsequent victory over them, and his insistence in driving the grafter and slum-owner from public life. The war is thus often made a pretext for vengeance against the Socialist Reformer—a war "activity" by no means confined to the New World.

We Irish exiles in the United States at America's entry into the war at first thought that all Irish Propaganda on behalf of self-determination for our Small Nation would have been made impossible, that our meetings would have been suppressed, and that we ourselves would be sent to prison or deported. To our great surprise nothing of the kind happened. Irish Propaganda went on, if possible, more strongly than ever. In my own case my largest public meetings in the largest halls of the United States—one of them, the Auditorium in San Francisco, holding twenty thousand people—were held after America's entry into the war. It was about that time I started for the west, and realised for the first time the enormous size of the States to be covered: realised that I was touring not a nation but a continent. San Francisco is in many respects as different from New York as Petrogad is from London, and no one can estimate the strength of Irish sentiment in the United States who has not included the west in his observations. Butte, Montana, and San Franscisco, are more enthusiastically Irish, and now more enthusiastically Sinn Fein than any town in Ireland is. Moreover, in the west particularly the Irish blood hold the strings of government in their hands—judges, lawyers, policemen, are usually Irish to a man. A large percentage of Irish among the soldiers and in the camps in California and in the State of Washington is a factor to be reckoned with. In fact, generally, American soldiers are extremely susceptible to Irish Propaganda. They flocked to our meetings and many of them told me that America's entry into the war, far from changing their sentiment towards the problem of Ireland's freedom made them feel more intensely than ever that the United States has a duty to perform to Ireland as well as to the other Small Nations. "Now that we are in it," they said, "we shall see to it that you get your full share. Ireland must be free as well as Belgium!" During the year and a half of my stay in the United States I spoke in the following States:—New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, Oregon, Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, California, Washington, Montana, Texas, Colorado, Wisconsin, Ohio, Kansas, Missouri, from Texas to the Canadian frontier, from New York to San Francisco, to Montana miners, to the Professors at Harvard, to the Congressmen

and Senators in Washington, to Socialists and Pacifists, speaking in all at over 250 public meetings. At two of these —one in Washington's largest hall, Madison Square Gardens which holds 10,000 people, one in San Francisco's largest hall—there were interruptions from women "vigilantes"—as the extreme patriots are proud of calling themselves—but it was interesting to observe that the interrupters, not the speakers, were removed by the police for "disturbing the meeting!" On another occasion in Los Angeles a policeman, whose family hailed from County Clare, said to a Canadian woman who demanded my arrest on the spot for "sedition": "Sure, ma'am, this in an Irish meeting—we are all for Ireland here, and if you don't conduct yourself I will have to put you out." As Liam Mellows observed at a New York meeting: "Blood is thicker than water and Irish blood is the thickest in the world.' America is not blind to the fact that Ireland up to the present hour is a country governed by force, held by an army of occupation under martial law. The authorities in America are well aware that the Irish, to whom they look as their best and most loyal citizens, are becoming more and more restive on this question. The Irish in America might speak on this with authority, for more than any other race they have given their sons in this war. While their loyalty to the land of their adoption is unshakeable and most touching, their loyalty to the land of their fathers is also strong, and they ask insistently: "Is Ireland the only country that will not be made safe for Democracy?" If peace is to see Belgium free, Rumania, Poland, the Czecho-Slovaks, and Jugo-Slavs, and the others granted self-determination, while Ireland alone continues the victim of alien militarism, then the people of the United States will realise that their Republic will have abandoned her own principles to her lasting shame, and that the sacrifices of her sons in the war will have helped but to rivet Ireland's chains. The problem is one of which President Wilson is fully aware, and he is, I am convinced, prepared to press it as vital at the Peace Conference for the sake of the future peace of the world, as well as for the honour of the United States. A striking proof of the strength of Irish sentiment was seen in New York's Mayoral Election in November, 1917. The late ex-Mayor of New York, John Mitchel, had been returned four years previously by the Irish vote. He was the grandson of John Mitchel, the great Irish leader

imprisoned and exiled perpetually from Ireland after the '48 Rising. That record was enough to make every man of Irish birth or descent in New York vote for Mitchel, but once elected, Mayor Mitchel, like other politicians, forgot the Irish, and denounced and repudiated all Irish-Americans who dared to ask for fair-play for Ireland as well as Belgium. He posed as the one and only patriot, wrapping himself in the American Flag, while patriotism of the most Jingo kind was his platform. He had behind him all the New York dailies with one exception, while the monied interest of the Morgans, the Vanderbilts, and the Trusts backed him up. The Vanderbilts, as his friends proudly boasted, called him "Jack," but he was mistaken in suspecting that he could dispense with the Irish, and was beaten by an overwhelming majority. The fate of Mayor Mitchel had been a salutory lesson to the politicians and the patriots. At the last Congressional Elections the Irish made Ireland a test question wherever the candidates standing had a strong Irish vote in their constituencies. Hitherto the Irish have supported the Democratic Party, but the recent defeat of many of the Democrats is probably an indication that their support is only conditional and that they will, if necessary, defeat the Democrat unless he is prepared to stand for freedom all round. There were last year six resolutions on the Irish Question before Congress, all, with one exception, framed by Republican Congressmen. One of them was from Jeannette Rankin—"The Lady from Montana" as she is called—the only woman representative in Congress. Miss Rankin is returned by the Irish vote of the Montana miners, and the flag of the Irish Republic occupies the place of honour over her desk in her office in Washington. She is of Scotch and French extraction, without a drop of Irish blood, but she told me that her French mother had always taught her to love Ireland.

On the Eve of St. Patrick's Day of last year, the veteran leader (since dead) of the Republican Party in the Senate —Senator Gallinger of New Hampshire—brought in a resolution laying down as a principle Ireland's right to self-determination and suggesting a referendum of the adult population of Ireland as to what form of government the Nation will accept. This resolution had the effect of a bomb on the British Embassy in Washington and was described by the "Washington Post," a hostile and reactionary organ,

as one "loaded with dynamite." It was an open secret in Washington that the President favoured the suggestion of a referendum for Ireland. For a time he trusted that Mr. Lloyd George's Convention might bring forth some satisfactory solution, but when the Convention collapsed it became clear that there could be no settlement of the Irish Question as long as that settlement remained in the hands of Great Britain.

The "Friends of Irish Freedom" in the United States arranged a monster petition—which has been signed by over two and a half million American citizens—for presentation to President Wilson, claiming also Ireland's right to self-determination.

On St. Patrick's Day last year 50,000 Irishmen and women walked in procession down Fifth Avenue, New York, bearing side by side the American and the Irish Republican Flags, while an effective "sticker" (poster) was being widely circulated throughout the United States bearing entwined the Irish and American Republican Colours, with underneath the words from President Wilson: "We fight for the rights and liberties of small nations," with the addition: "Ireland is a nation and must be free."

[This Poster is reproduced on our cover.]

Last October an important Congress of "Small and Subject Nations" was held at the Hotel McAlpin, New York, and sat for three days. At it were represented not only those subject and oppressed nationalities that were under the yoke of Germany, Austria or Turkey, but also those under the British Empire—Ireland, India, Egypt, and the Boers. A powerful effort was made to suppress the Congress and influences were set at work in Washington to have it declared seditious and to have certain of its speakers—the Irish and the Indian—arrested. No official action was taken, however, against the Congress, which proved to be a great success. I had the honour of putting the case for Ireland, while the case for India was put by a distinguished Indian exile, Lajpat Rai, the Editor of "New India," and ex-Boer General, a friend of De Wet and De La Rey, General Pierson, represented the Boers. It was notable at the Congress that all the representatives of the small and subject peoples felt united by a common bond of sympathy against their oppressors. A resolution was sent to President Wilson —it was afterwards recorded in the Senate Record by Senator

Borah—once more laying down the now famous principle of self-determination for all peoples. Professor Masaryk—who went to Washington as a representative of the Czecho-Slovaks to plead on their behalf, and who has since been made President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic—when interviewed by an Irish Deputation on the subject of Ireland, warmly expressed the sympathy of his people for the claims of Ireland. He himself was then under the sentence of death as a Rebel against the Austrian Government. He declared that Ireland had always been a beacon-light to the subject peoples in Austria—our struggle being largely parallel to their own.

All these instances (I mention but a few) are indications of the large and growing feeling in the United States that the case of Ireland must be included in the Peace Conference. It is significant that the British Press has carefully suppressed all mention of this propaganda, fostering steadily the calumny that the United States has been alienated by Ireland's attitude towards the war.

PRESIDENT WILSON.

Since my return to Ireland I have often been asked my view as to President Wilson's personality. It is an extremely complex one, and one that has been variously judged from every possible angle. I think the President's attitude towards progress may best be illustrated by his action upon a matter of internal American policy, namely: The Womens' Suffrage Federal Amendment. It tends to shew that while President Wilson is not of the type of the lone pioneer who would push ahead on a forlorn hope against any odds, he is guided usually by what one may call a policy of enlightened expediency, and there is no statesman in the world to-day who knows better the exact time to come in on the right side and to press a reform home to a successful issue, when the demand becomes imperative and insistent. When America decided to enter the war the same situation was created with regard to the Women's Suffrage Movement as occurred in Great Britain in 1914. Many of the so-called Constitutional Suffragists turned their backs on Suffrage and preached to their followers the urgent duty of winning the war before all else. Their leaders—such as Dr. Anna Howard-Shaw, Mrs. Chapman-Catt—put Suffrage on the

shelf as did some of their British sisters, and told their followers that to ask for a vote just then, when their country was in a war to make the world safe for Democracy, was to be unpatriotic, if not Pro-German. "The New York Times," and other violently anti-Progressive organs, adopted this argument. A comfortable and decent burial was accordingly arranged for the Suffrage corpse, and the interment would have taken place duly but for the Militant Section, known as "The Nationalist Womens' Party," headed by Alice Paul, a Quaker, and Lucy Byrne, an Irishwoman. These women were not content to bury Suffrage till the war was over, but on the contrary showed a most insistent desire to have it "right now." They asked inconveniently: "How could America help to make the world safe for Democracy, when she herself was not a democrat, and while millions of her women were then denied citizenship?" They asked that America put her own house in order, before reforming the world outside, by immediately putting through the Federal Amendment, granting Suffrage to the women of the entire United States at one stroke. Hitherto Suffragists had mainly confined their attentions to winning the vote State by State—a slow and weary process which has succeeded in winning the vote in 13 out of the 48 States. There then arose a situation extremely awkward for the politician, for there is nothing that your politician dislikes more than this harping upon painful questions in an hour of crisis—and there always is an hour of crisis for the politician, which furnishes a convenient excuse for shelving reforms. The chief obstacle to the passage of the Federal Amendment was the Democratic Party, headed by President Wilson, who was known to be opposed to the Federal Amendment, though personally a Suffragist. The National Women's Party had opposed the Democrats and President Wilson's candidature in 1916, on the principle adopted by the late Suffragist, Christobel Pankhurst, of "Keep the Liberal out"—in other words: turn out the government responsible for blocking the measure. Such a policy was used on more than one occasion, unfortunately, by Parnell, when he turned the Irish vote in favour of the Tories. This did not mean that the Republican Party in America was necessarily regarded as the more progressive, no more than the Tory Party was by the British Militants or by Parnell; but the women felt that they could only secure reform by

using one Party effectively against its rival. All this, from the politician's point of view, was of course most deplorable, but the women wrote upon their banners: "Suffrage first," and acted up to that principle. On America's entry into the war in 1917, there came a clamour for a truce. The Constitutionalists in a body rolled up their banner and handed it over for the duration of the war. It was hoped that no more would be heard of the Federal Amendment until Europe was safe for Democracy, but the Nationalist Women's Party, whose motto was "Suffrage now," decided otherwise. Accordingly they directed their attention to the Head of the Democratic Party, President Wilson, and they inaugurated a State-wide campaign, starting with the White House. They placed peaceful pickets with suffrage banners—purple, white, and yellow—to stand at the gates of the President's official residence. On these banners they wrote up many of President's Wilson's historic and epoch-making phrases, such as: "We fight for those things which are nearest our hearts," "This is a war to make the world safe for Democracy," and under these lines they wrote such comments as: "America is not a Democrat while she denies votes to half her citizens." Once when an Irish Deputation went to lay the case for Ireland before the Senate, the pickets seized the occasion for propaganda and a friendly alliance. The pickets are warm friends of Ireland, and once when the Russians came to Washington and were received by the President, the pickets informed the Russians that American women were not free—as Russian women are to-day, the Russian and the Irish Republics being the only Republics that in their Proclamation had given equal rights to men and women. The pickets were also in attendance when Mr. Balfour came to Washington. It must have seemed like old times to him to see Suffragists demonstrating once again. Finally, the authorities, who had pretended to ignore the women or to kill their cause by ridicule, changed their tactics and began to persecute. Curious how alike these authorities always are in their methods. After the Russian incident the pickets were arrested. They could not be charged with picketing, for this is legal. They could not be charged with wanting a vote or wanting women made safe for Democracy, for so far that had not been made a Statutory Offence: so they were charged—again how like some others—with unlawful assembly and with obstructing the traffic. Pennsylvania

Avenue is as wide as O'Connell Street and two small pickets at the White House Gates could hardly be said to create a block, but the usual police methods of finding a crowd, and blaming you for it, of creating a disorder and arresting you for it, were forthwith employed—again with the usual result. Picketing became popular. Hundreds of women were arrested. The local gaols become congested and lo! the new criminals were found to be the wives and sisters and daughters of prominent Government officials, of Senators, Judges, Professors, Lawyers, Editors—pillars of the State and shining jewels of the Democratic Party. Then the women hunger-struck, and the authorities—the good old authorities who always did accept forcible feeding—they beat them, locked them up "incommunicado" in vermin-infested cells, refused them lawyers, tooth brushes, and other essentials of civilization, and for some days the daily bulletins from the prisons thrust the Western Offensive off the front page of the newspapers. Prominent officials—supporters of the Government—like Dudley-Malone, the brilliant Irish lawyer—resigned their posts in protest. Personal representations were made to the President, who expressed his horror at prison brutalities. The warden of the Workhouse resigned his post, and at Christmas, 1917, a general release took place, and a brief truce was negotiated with a promise that after the holidays something would be arranged. Accordingly, early in January of this year, Congress voted on the Federal Amendment—introduced by the woman representative, Jeanette Rankin—and passed it by the necessary two-thirds majority. Before the voting President Wilson gave an interview to the heads of the Parties, and urged them to drop their opposition to the Federal Amendment—thus showing by his conversation that he is statesman enough to change his mind when sufficient cause is shewn—unlike some of our home brand—and his pronouncement had the desired effect, turning the votes necessary to secure the passage of the measure. Recently the President again personally urged upon the Senate the full need of passing the Amendment, so that it will not be long before the necessary technicalities are gone through before all the women of all the States who have attained the age of 21 enjoy equal rights with men. I have dwelt upon this story largely for the sake of its moral—it contains a valuable lesson for all reformers on the need of persistency and

courage, and on the mutability of politicians, *mobile quale puma al vento.* When the gale blows these straws are swept before or swept away entirely. Similarly on the Irish and other questions—persistence and solidarity will win out no matter how strong the opposing forces.

INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT WILSON.

Sometime in January, 1918, I received a mysterious paper (smuggled over, I cannot tell how, but certainly not "passed by the Censor") from Cumann na mBan in Ireland, with a message that I was to deliver the paper "personally into the President's own hands." It was a petition signed by Constance de Marcievicz, President, Cumann na mBan, by Mrs. Pearse, Mrs. Wyse Power, and many other distinguished Irishwomen. It put forth the claim of Ireland for self-determination, and appealed to President Wilson to include Ireland among the Small Nations for whose freedom America was fighting. I regret I have not an exact copy of that historic document, and of others that would have also been of much value to me in this brief survey. It was impossible to bring any papers with me from the United States, but later I hope to retrieve omissions when circumstances again permit free speech and freedom of the Press.

At first, the message that this petition was to be presented personally rather dismayed me. In January, 1918, President Wilson was overwhelmed with work, and he has always been, even normally, one of the least accessible of Presidents. Still it was "up to me" to formulate the request for a brief interview, and to work hard to get it. It was through the intermediary of Mr. Bainbridge Colby, President of the Shipping Department, and of Mr. Tumulty, the President's Private Secretary, that that request was granted. Three days after President Wilson formulated his now famous "Fourteen Points," and on the day after the passing through Congress of the Federal Amendment for Women Suffrage throughout the States, I was accorded my interview—I was the first Irish exile and the first Sinn Feiner to enter the White House, and the first to wear there the badge of the Irish Republic, which I took care to pin in my coat before I went. The President had been busy all the morning receiving American suffragists who came from all over the country to thank him in person for his advocacy of their cause, and as

it is generally admitted that the women of the West, enjoying a franchise, had cast an almost unanimous vote for Mr. Wilson's election, it was appropriate that they should congratulate him on their further step towards the general enfranchisement of women.

The White House tradition is one of simplicity and democracy. Theoretically at least the first citizen of the Republic is at the service of the poorest and humblest citizen, and, though in practice, and from the very nature of things, Presidents nowadays cannot emulate the simplicity of George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, still, enough of the tradition remains to permeate the White House atmosphere. Mr. Asquith's butler, and possibly even Sir Edward Carson's, shews more "side" and self-importance than President Wilson, who removes all embarassment by a cordial handshake, and a pleasant smile. His general appearance is much less "dour" than his pictures would lead one to suppose. His manner is that of a Professor in a good humour, academic tempered with amenity. A glance from his spectacled grey eyes is shrewd and penetrating, yet not unkindly. Our interview was private—in fact, there is in the United States an unwritten law precluding any report of an interview with the President, save that sent out by himself. The fact, however, of his "friendly gesture to Ireland" in granting an interview to a declared Sinn Feiner was widely commented on by the friendly and the hostile press of the United States of America, also that he received a document unsubmitted to the British Censor, and that he consented to discuss and consider Ireland, was significant. At the time of the interview the President, I may say, had in mind a possible settlement by the Lloyd George Convention then sitting in Ireland. It was clear to me that he had been given hopes, if not definite pledges, that the Irish question would then be settled. The President would not probably be dissatisfied to find the thorny question of Ireland out of the way before the Peace Conference, so that Great Britain could say to America: "This question between me and Ireland is adjusted to our mutual satisfaction," and pass to the more congenial atmosphere of Jugo-Slavs, and Esthonians. We Irish Republicans had, of course, no such faith in the Convention, recognising as we did that it was largely Lloyd Georgian "camouflage," got up for the deception of the United States. A fortnight after my interview with the

President it collapsed like a badly-built house of cards, as was bound to happen sooner or later, leaving once more the Peace Conference solution of Ireland the alternative policy. From my experience of the President, from what he said and what he left unsaid, I am convinced that while he might have preferred the Irish question settled "domestically," he will now see the force of having it settled internationally for the sake of the peace of the world. President Wilson is not the type that will lead, pioneer-like, a forlorn hope, or stake all on a desperate enterprise; but, on the other hand, he is one who by tradition (he has Irish blood in his veins) and by temperament, will see the need of self-determination for Ireland as well as for other nations. There will be sufficient pressure at home to keep the Irish question well in the fore-front, and "if only Ireland shews herself strongly for this solution," President Wilson cannot turn a deaf ear. As an American his view is naturally more sympathetic than even the most enlightened English view. Moreover, America is out, as he says, to see justice done all round, and it would be therefore a point of honour to see that such even-handed justice is meted out to all alike. A free Belgium, a restored Alsace-Lorraine, a free and unpartitioned Poland, a free Serbia, a free Bohemia, and a coerced and oppressed Ireland would be a blot for ever upon the honour and national integrity of the American Republic, and a menace to the future peace of the world, on which America is building.

Another factor that we Irish must not forget is that but for America's coming to the rescue the Allies would have sustained a crushing defeat. America is, therefore, in the strongest position to make Ireland's case an essential—the final decision has passed for ever out of Great Britain's hands. President Wilson is known in Washington to favour a referendum on the Irish question—America is now in a position to enforce such a settlement.

After seeing the President I spent several months in Washington interviewing Senators and Congressmen on the Irish question, and everywhere I was met with friendliness and sympathy, the atmosphere of Congress being more democratic and kindlier than the Tory clubdom of the British House of Commons. Most of all, it is an atmosphere more human and more courteous where women are concerned. I found every Senator and Congressman I approached, from Champ Clark, the veteran speaker of the House, to the

newest recruit accessible, all eager to talk of Ireland—indeed, there was but one, a Bohemian Jew, who told me that the "Irish vote" did not count in his State, and who, therefore, took merely an academic interest in Ireland's freedom. For not only is the Irish vote a factor almost everywhere, it is in addition so highly organised that even where small in number it can make its influence felt, and can sway a large number of other votes to its side. Every Congressman is aware of this fact, and the recent "slump" in the Democratic Party at the Congressional elections last November is due largely to the turn-over of the Irish vote to the Republican side. Hitherto the Irish were usually Democrats but many voted anti-Democrat as a protest against the indifference or veiled hostility of the Democratic Party on the Irish question. Many Democrats were defeated recently because, like John Mitchel's grandson, they forgot Ireland.

My experience in Washington, therefore, further strengthened my conviction that the question of Ireland's freedom is a by-factor in American politics, and that those who ignore it do so at their peril. We held a large meeting in Washington in April, 1918, to wind up our campaign, and it was attended largely by Congressmen, Senators, and leaders of opinion in both Houses. At it was passed unanimously a resolution in favour of Ireland's claim to independence. John Devoy, the veteran Irish leader, spoke stirringly, and addresses were also delivered by Liam Mellowes, Dr. McCartan, and Padraic Colum. Flags of the American and Irish Republics entwined decorated the hall, and the whole was a striking demonstration, in the very capital of the United States of America, to the strength of Ireland's demand. That and a final meeting in New York—the Irish Peace Convention—were the last meetings I addressed. On June 27th, 1918, I left for home, only to be held up at Liverpool. That story and the story of my subsequent internment in Holloway, I may not dwell upon just now, the exuberance of Lord French and Mr. Shortt having nothing to do with the present narrative. My American mission was accomplished, and I could return home satisfied that I had tried to put the truth before the American people, and that I might trust to the international situation to do the rest.